



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION, ABILITY, ROLE  
PERCEPTION, SITUATIONAL FACTOR (MARS) AND EMPLOYEE  
BEHAVIOR AT THE WORKPLACE**

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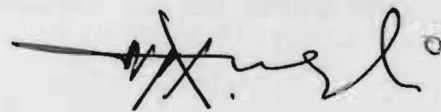
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## **ABSTRACT**

### ***THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION, ABILITY, ROLE PERCEPTION AND SITUATIONAL FACTOR (MARS) AND EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR AT THE WORKPLACE***

*ARLOUVA MITCHEL WALTER JOIMIL*

This study aims to identify the relationship between motivation, ability, role perception and situational factor (MARS) and employee behavior at the workplace. The independent variables of this study are MARS whereas the dependent variable is employee behavior. Apart from that, the study is conducted at one of the private sector company in Kota Kinabalu Sabah. In order to collect the required information, survey questionnaire is used. There are total of 120 questionnaires being distributed among the executive and non-executive employees of the selected organization. The data collected is analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science version 12 (SPSS). Frequency and percentage is used to summarize the respondent demographic. Meanwhile, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient is used to measure the relationship between MARS and employee behavior at the workplace. The outcome shows that there is a significant relationship between motivation, ability, role perception and situational factors (MARS) and employee behavior at the workplace. Moreover, ability is dominated as the dominant factor in influencing behavior of employees. Implication of the study recognized that employer should take proper action to deal with problematic employee. Besides, the recommendation for future research or practitioners and organizations is discussed in details to provide better suggestions or ideas.

## **ABSTRAK**

### **HUBUNGAN ANTARA MARS DAN TINGKAH LAKU PEKERJA DI TEMPAT KERJA**

*Arlouva Mitchel Walter Joimil*

*Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara motivasi, keupayaan, persepsi peranan dan factor persekitaran (MARS) dan tingkah laku pekerja di tempat kerja. Pembolehubah bersandar dalam kajian ini adalah MARS manakala pembolehubah tidak bersandar adalah tingkah laku pekerja. Kajian ini dijalankan di salah sebuah sektor swasta di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Borang soal selidik digunakan untuk pengumpulan data. Terdapat 120 borang soal selidik yang di agihkan kepada para pekerja di dalam sektor berkenaan. Data yang dikumpul telah di analisa dengan menggunakan SPSS versi 12. Latar belakang responden di terjemahkan dengan menggunakan frekuensi dan peratus. Sementara itu, ujian korelasi Pearson digunakan untuk menentukan hubungan antara MARS dan tingkah laku pekerja manakala ujian regresi berganda digunakan untuk mengenalpasti faktor yang dominan terhadap tingkah laku pekerja. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa hubungan antara MARS dan tingkah laku pekerja adalah signifikan. Selain itu, dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan faktor keupayaan sebagai faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi tingkah laku pekerja di tempat kerja. Implikasi kajian menunjukkan bahawa majikan harus mengambil langkah yang betul untuk menguruskan pekerja yang bermasalah. Seterusnya, cadangan untuk bakal penyelidik dan juga organisasi dibincangkan dengan lebih mendalam untuk memberikan pendapat dan idea yang lebih memberansangkan.*

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes a research on the factors affecting employee behavior at the workplace. The highlighted factors here are motivation, ability, role perception and situational factor. The combination of these factors may have influence on the behavior and performance of employees at the workplace. By reviewing this chapter, reader can have a holistic view of the study. This research then will be explained in details through background of the study of factors influencing behavior, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, conceptual framework, hypotheses, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitation of the study and chapter summary. Through this kind of study, organization will be more aware on the importance of employee behavior in determining the organization survival.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

Effectiveness of an organization is largely depends on the behavior of their employee in particular organization. The organization seen the individual employee



as the basic building block of the organization to function properly (Jong & Hartog, 2007). Besides, how individual behave in an organization would indirectly affect the organizational performance. Therefore, many expertises whose major in organizational behavior (OB) have do research in order for them to have more understanding in context of employee behavior. Nowadays, managers have seen employee behavior as one of the important element in maintaining organization effectiveness. Many organization scholars have been seeking to study on how does employee behavior plays its role in organization.

Firstly, what is meant by behavior? Behavior refers to the actions of people whereas organizational behavior is concerned more specifically with the actions of people at work (Robbins & Coulter, 2005, pp. 342). There are several types of individual behavior in organization. According to Mcshane and Von Glinow (2008), there are five types of employee behavior in organization. These five types of employee behavior are task performance, organizational citizenship, counterproductive work behaviors, joining and staying with the organization and maintaining work attendance.

By referring to MARS model of individual behavior, there are four factors that have been identified contributing to employee behavior; motivation, ability, role perception and situational factors. The MARS model shows that the four factors have a combine effect on individual performance and if any of the factors weakens, the employee performance decreases (Mcshane & Glinow, 2008). Motivation is the internal force that influences the direction, intensity, and persistence of a person's voluntary choices of behavior. Ability includes both the natural aptitudes and learned capabilities required to successfully complete a task. Role perception refers to a person's belief about types of behavior that are appropriate in a particular situation whereas situational factors are the condition that would limit the employee in performing a particular behavior.

Since that the importance of employee behavior has been explained, it is crucial to determine the factor that potentially influence employee behavior. McShane and Von Glinow (2008) come out with the Theory of Attribution. The Attribution Theory refers to the process of deciding whether an observed behavior or event is caused largely by the person (internal factors) or the environment (external factor) (McShane & Von Glinow, 2008). Internal factors here include the individual's ability or motivation while external factor here refers to the lack of resources, coworkers or just luck. Moreover, the internal factors can be seen as the determinants of the employee behavior. However, this employee behavior as well could be affected by the external factor. Therefore, understanding both internal and external factors are essential for organization so that the organization can establish work environment that are comfortable to their employee.

Improvement in organizational outcome for both the organization and its members, are then a function of changes in the behavior of organizational participants (Porras, 1987), as long as the behavior change becomes institutionalized (Goodman & Dean, 1982; Tannenbum, 1971 cited in Robertson, 1994). By realizing that employee behavior can give big impact to the effectiveness of the organization, many training and development's objective is to bring positive changes in employee behavior. Other than that, the organization hope that by the efforts of providing training to their employee, the knowledge, ability as well as the attitude of their employee will be strengthen as they need that to improve their work performance consistently in long term basis.

In summation, obviously shows that employee behavior is one of the important elements that contribute to employee performance and directly linked to the effectiveness of an organization. Therefore, in order to maintain effectiveness of an organization, Human Resource Development professionals have to seriously look into the factors that have the potential to influence employee behavior.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

The impact of rapid changes in technology nowadays needs highly skilled workers to perform the new developed technology. Many people have to change their behavior to approach their job to keep them in track with the objectives of the organization. Every person is unique and possessed different personality. So, employees respond differently to the same situation because of their uniqueness. For these reason, managers are challenged to understand and recognize the differences in their employee. According to McShane and Von Glinow (2008), in order to change employee behavior, managers have to find out the factors that influence employee behavior.

There are theoretical evidences that support the variables in this study such as Expectancy Theory and Goal Setting Theory. Expectancy Theory is one of the motivation theory based on the idea that work effort is directed towards behavior that people believe will lead to desired outcomes (McShane & Von Glinow, 2008). According to Daly and Kleiner (1995) in their study entitle how to motivate problematic employee, Expectancy Theory has been highlighted as the best theory in motivating all employees. Meanwhile, Goal Setting Theory refers to the process of motivating employees and clarifying their role perception by establishing performance objectives (McShane & VonGlinow, 2008). However, According to Hanna, Burns and Backhouse (2000), improving motivation and behavior is not the only approach to increasing performance; the other is through technological improvements.

An empirical study was carried out by Robertson (1994) on the relationship between work setting and employee behavior. In his study, he had focused on the critical linkage in the organizational change process where he believed that work behaviors and attitudes can be shaped if the stimuli and reinforcers are controlled. The sample of this study consists of 107 non-supervisory employees of two separate and very different organizations. Result of the study shows that behavior in some

categories tends to be exhibited with the similar frequency instead of various dimension of work setting. However, this study just considering certain variable of work setting such as work style behavior, goal effectiveness, job complexity and others in contributing to employee behavior at work place. The study did not emphasize other factors such as MARS as part of the factor to contribute in employee behavior.

Instead of that, according to one major survey, most employer (92%) of them state that motivating employees has become more challenging from day to day (McShane & Von Glinow, 2008). This is due to the reason that in order to motivate employee, the right condition is required as well as the employer's action to search for more contemporary ways to motivate his/her staffs. Therefore, it is crucial for the management to figure out the factors that have the potential to influence employee behavior at the workplace.

Practically, most organization nowadays encourages employee engagement as their field of interest. This due to the concept of employee engagement consist most of the drivers of individual behavior and performance result as well. If the employees have emotional and cognitive motivation, ability in performing their job, have clear understanding about the vision of the organization and the specific role accountable for him/her in that vision, they may have the feeling of belongingness in the organization and thus motivate the employee to get their job done with success and maintain positive type of behavior.

From the theoretical, empirical and practical gap explained above, there are numbers of studies that has been done related to behavior that influenced by motivation. According to McShane and VonGlinow (2008), there are other factors that potentially affect employee behavior at the work place other than motivation that have less research done on it. There are ability, role perception as well as situational factors. Thus, this research will determine is there any relationship between the factors above MARS towards the behavior of employee at the work place.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are spread into general objective and specific objectives.

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this research is to study the relationship between independent variables MARS and dependent variable (employee behavior) at the workplace.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

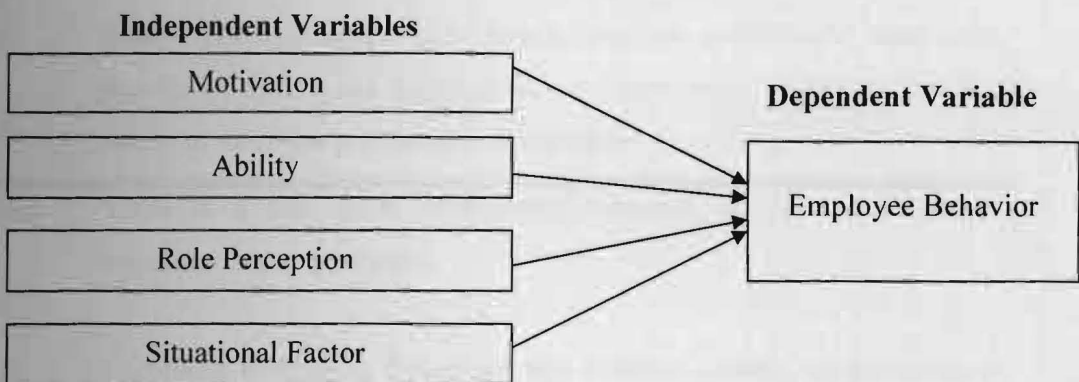
The specific objectives of this study are as below;

- a) To determine the relationship between motivation and employee behavior at the workplace.
- b) To determine the relationship between ability and employee behavior at the workplace.
- c) To determine the relationship between role perception and employee behavior at the workplace.
- d) To determine the relationship between situational factor and employee behavior at the workplace.
- e) To determine the dominant factor among the four factors (MARS) in influencing employee behavior at the workplace.

## 1.5 Conceptual Framework

Below is the conceptual framework that being used as the guideline to look into the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The independent variables are classified as MARS whereas the dependent variable in this context is employee behavior.

Scope of this framework is to identify the existence of a significant relationship between each of the independent variable to dependent variable.



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**

*Source: Adapted from McShane & Von Glinow (2008)*



## 1.6 Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

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H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between motivation and employee behaviour at the workplace.

This hypothesis can be supported with a study done by Daly and Kleiner (1995) concerning on how to motivate problematic employees. Results of their study highlighted the Expectancy Theory as the best theory to motivate problematic employees.

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H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between ability and employee behaviour at the workplace.

According to Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (1996), ability refers to the knowledge, experience and skill that an individual or groups brings to a particular activity or task. Without ability, employees are unable to perform a task and behavior because different task require different ability.

---

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between role perception and employee behaviour at the workplace.

According to Hanna et al., (2000), clear performance targets ruled out direct and obvious alternative ways of behaving. In order to have clear role perception of the job, the employee needs to understand thoroughly what are the major goals and objective, how should it be accomplished and the priority of each of the objectives.

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H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant relationship between situational factors and employee behaviour at the workplace.

According to Hanna et al., (2000), some of the situational variables are supportive of more positive attitude and behavior.

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H<sub>5</sub>: There is a dominant factor among the four factors MARS in influencing employee behavior at the workplace.

According to Hanna et al., (2000), as there are so many variables influencing behavior it is quite possible for there to be a domain problems that cause all sorts of behavior to result.

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**Table 1.1: Alternative Hypotheses**

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

The study is able to help organization in recognizing problematic employee. A problem employee needs to be identified as soon as possible, so that the corrective action can be taken immediately when problems are still minor (Daly & Kleiner, 1995). People engage in many different types of behavior in organizational settings. Understanding the employee behavior is unavoidable in recent years as other management concerns such as employee productivity, employee performance and quality of goods and services (Ivanchevich & Matteson, 2002). Furthermore, the study is also able to help organization in selecting and training the employees in the HRD programmes based on their potential and resulting in increasing the work productivity of the employee. Organizational performance can be affected by the way their employees behave. Hence, the study is significant to the organization.

In terms of theoretical gaps, the significant of the study can be explained by referring to Equity Theory, where people developed perceptions of fairness in the distribution and exchange of resources (McShane & Von Glinow, 2008). In organizational context, employees determine feeling of equity by comparing their own performance and yet the rewards that they get in exchange of the performance that they shown. Hence, if the other person is getting more rewards for the same contribution, the other one will feels inequity in the sense of undercompensated (Golembiewski, 1993). Therefore, organization must develop and establish a work setting where their employee will feel equitably compensated thus would motivate them to put more effort in getting their job done.

Employee motivation, according to McShane and Von Glinow (2008), motivation is one of the four factors that are crucial and have the direct influence on employee's voluntary behavior. So, the study on the relationship between motivation and employee behavior is important as the organization is able to see how motivation influences behavior which in return will affect performance. By knowing this, organization can take action in order to avoid undesirable performance.